

The Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and meeting on Tuesday March 18, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wethersfield Police Department Meeting Room, 250 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

As Chairman Hammer was absent, Vice Chairman Richard Roberts called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

### **1.1 ROLL CALL & SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Philip Knecht, clerk called roll as follows:

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Excused</b>
Joseph Hammer, Chairman			X
Richard Roberts	X		
Philip Knecht	X		
Thomas Harley			X
Robert Jurasin	X		
Earle Munroe			X
Dorcas McHugh	X		
Frederick Petrelli	X		
James Hughes	X		
Anthony Homicki	X		
George Oickle	X		
David Drake	X		

**Also present: Peter Gillespie, Town Planner  
Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner**

Vice Chairman Roberts noted the three members were absent and noted that all members present would be participating and voting.

## **2. OLD BUSINESS**    There was no old business.

## **3. NEW BUSINESS**

**3.1 APPLICATION NO. 1604-08-Z CREC-Soundbridge Seeking Site Plan & Design Review** for additions, renovations and site improvements at 123 Progress Drive.

Steve Dewey of Quisenberry Arcari Architects was representing CREC Soundbridge and described the applicant's intent to construct a 15,000 s. f. addition. He noted that this is a school for hearing impaired students with special needs from birth to age 5. Mr. Dewey explained the facility's needs to create a new classroom wing. He noted that the addition would also house a Class room multi-purpose and would allow for the reconfiguration of the administrative office area and main entrance. The addition would also provide for new audiology testing rooms and an auditorium. Mr. Dewey then discussed the roof plan and noted that multiple small mechanical units are being proposed which will create less noise than one larger unit. He also noted that the

property lines are over 100 ft. away, and that there would be no unnecessary clearing. Mr. Dewey then distributed revised elevation drawings.

Commissioner McHugh asked how children arrived at the facility. Steve Dewey noted that it was a mix of bussing and parent drop-off. Commissioner Oickle asked why they were tightening up on the entry and ramp. Mr. Dewey responded that they were still finalizing the grades and that the plan doesn't fully show the ramp and noted that the intent was to allow for the reconfiguration of the entry. Mr. Dewey stated that this area would still be used for a student drop-off area. Commissioner Oickle then asked how many more students could be accommodated with the approval of the proposed addition. Mr. Dewey responded that the current school population is approximately 300 students and that the design approach was for the population not to change. Commissioner Oickle again asked if there would be any student increase. Mr. Dewey noted that the additional was proposed to provide a cleaner facility layout.

Commissioner McHugh asked how they are proposing to designate the drop-off area. Steve Dewey noted that it is an accessible van drop-off area and will be maintained. Commissioner McHugh then voice her concern with regards to where the children will be dropped off and circulation issues with parents driving their own cars and the van and bus traffic. She noted that parents will drop off their children on a rainy at the door.

Vice Chairman Roberts asked how many people the proposed auditorium can hold. Steve Dewey stated that the auditorium was designed for 135 seats and 5 handicap seats and noted that the school may consider allowing other groups to use the facility.

Mark Fisher Landscape Architect from TO Design, LLC stated that his firm would be doing the exterior site work for Soundbridge addition. He discussed how the construction would require modifying a small area in front of the ramp to facilitate the building. Mr. Fisher noted that the plans call for adding sidewalks to the school for safety and egress purposes. He noted that the playground area would be moved to the western portion of the site and that it would require a 5-6' retaining wall. Mr. Fisher noted that the new plantings would be similar to what exists on the site then showed the Commission details of the landscaping plan.

Commissioner Oickle asked Mr. Fisher to point out what plantings are to be removed and what's to be replanted. Mr. Oickle voiced his concerned about noise spillover onto the properties behind the proposed new auditorium. Mark Fisher pointed out where the new auditorium was planned and noted that the Design Review Advisory Committee had suggested adding more evergreen trees in that area.

Steve Dewey then distributed a winter photo of above referenced area and noted that some smaller trees will be taken out. Mr. Dewey then described plans to add some deciduous and evergreens in that area. He also noted that there is a significant grade change which may also help in visual screening.

Mark Fisher noted that the storage building depicted on the plans will no longer be needed and will be removed from the final plans. Mr. Fisher stated that he is continuing to work on the drainage issues to satisfy the Town Engineer. Mr. Fisher stated that they can address the comments from Town Planning and Zoning Dept. and Town Engineer.

Vice Chairman Roberts noted that there is a letter dated March 13, 2008 from Fire Marshal Gary

Santoro stating that all his concerns were addressed, a letter dated February 21, 2008 stating that the Erosion & Sedimentation control plan was approved, a letter dated March 6, 2008 from the Sanitarium stating they had no comment, a memo dated March 11, 2008 from Peter Gillespie and Denise Bradley listing at least 20 outstanding items; including parking information and a memo dated February 19, 2008 from Mike Turner which also listed 13 outstanding items on it. Mr. Roberts then asked if the Commissioners had any other questions or concerns to discuss.

Commissioner Jurasin asked the applicant to address comments #6 on the memo dated February 19, 2008 from Mike Turner regarding the stormwater system. Mark Fisher stated that originally the catch basin had accidentally been shown as piping onto the adjacent property and would be changed. He added that no easement would be necessary. Commissioner Jurasin then asked for clarification regarding the type of approval was being sought. Vice Chairman Roberts stated that the applicant is seeking site plan approval but that the application is not a Public Hearing.

Commissioner Jurasin then asked for clarification as to how the auditorium addition does not require additional parking. He expressed concerned about the addition of the auditorium, and although there is not a proposed increase in student population, there will be an increase in daily non-school activities such as auditory testing which will also require more staff on site. Mark Fisher stated that there are currently 73 parking spaces on site and that the zoning requirements do not specifically address the number of parking spaces needed for school uses.

Vice Chairman Roberts stated that he would like to see the additional information required to make this application complete prior to proceeding to the approval stage.

Commissioner Knecht noted that he would be abstaining from voting due to a conflict of interest.

Mark Fisher tried to more clearly describe the parking situation and anticipated needs.

Elizabeth Cole, Director of Soundbridge School commented on events during non-school hours of operation and noted that there would be some additional cars on site.

Commissioner Jurasin wanted to know what the square footage of the existing building and the proposed additions.

Elizabeth Cole stated that the school would be enabled to double the ratio for typically developing children to the children who have hearing loss.

Vice Chairman Roberts asked how many students currently attend and what is the anticipated increase after construction completion. Elizabeth Cole described the current and proposed student enrollment levels and corresponding employee numbers. Ms. Cole noted that the school currently doesn't have the appropriate space necessary for all the services it provides.

Mr. Jurasin then asked if there will be an increase in staff and asked Ms. Cole to describe the different functions planned for the auditorium. Ms. Cole responded that she wants to see students involved in theater groups and to put on productions. The auditorium will also be used for training purposes, parent groups, special speakers and that the school may consider renting out the facility for additional public uses. Commissioner Jurasin asked if the details Ms. Cole had just given were described in a narrative for the record. Ms. Cole responded that they were not. Mr. Jurasin commented that the Commission doesn't want to see parents parked too far from the

school with no sidewalks. Mr. Jurasin went on to say that he would like the applicant to demonstrate that there is no need for additional parking and to provide a narrative explaining the proposed use of the auditorium. Vice Chairman Roberts echoed Commissioner Roberts suggestion.

Commissioner Oickle voiced concern about the potential noise produced from the auditorium air conditioning system. Mark Fisher stated that the air conditioning unit would be located in an enclosed attic space that will significantly buffer the noise. Mr. Oickle noted that he is more concerned with the location near the house. Mark Fisher noted that the proposed unit is being positioned on the parking lot side.

Commissioner Oickle then asked if the Design Review Advisory Committee had reviewed the proposal. Peter Gillespie noted a letter in the file dated March 5, 2008, suggesting that the buffer along south east corner be enhanced to provide more landscaping be added to increase the buffer to neighboring property. Mr. Oickle commented that he had no concern with the proposed architecture and asked if the applicant had met requirements of the two memos from town staff. Mark Fisher responded that the plans do not reflect the comments made but that the issues are mostly simple revisions.

Steve Dewey distributed copies of the photometric plans and described the overall site lighting conditions.

Commissioner Drake asked if the plan reflected existing trees. Mr. Dewey noted that the original site plan was used as a base map for the addition and that some of the plantings may have never been planted or have died. Commissioner Oickle noted that he would like to see a detailed landscaping plan for the buffer area and around the auditorium.

Commissioner Homicki asked the town planner if he was comfortable moving forward with the outstanding conditions. Peter Gillespie stated that he would like to see written responses to his memo so we can document it. Mark Fisher noted that he has a letter stating that the applicant would be willing to comply.

Commissioner McHugh wanted the applicant to clarify where the main entrance will be located and where are the children going to be dropped off. Steve Dewey noted the location of the relocated main entrance on the plans and gave a brief description of the student drop off/pick up.

Vice Chairman Roberts remarked that the plans the Commission had received prior to the meeting did not show any grade change and asked if the Town Engineer or Fire Marshal are aware of the grade change and whether that may impact their review. Steve Dewey stated that there would be no impact on the requirements of the Fire Marshal and that the change won't impact drainage or runoff.

Commissioner Hughes asked if there was a Knox box on site. Mark Fisher stated that the school currently has a Knox Box system which is located in the fire alarm panel. Steve Dewey noted that the applicant had talked to the Fire Marshal about construction phasing and will provide a detailed plan.

Commissioner Homicki asked how long the school had been located at its present location. Elizabeth Cole noted that the school opened in 1996. Mr. Homicki asked if there have been any

casualties or problems with existing traffic flow. Elizabeth Cole responded that all children with hearing loss are bussed and that the typically developing children's parents drive them.

Commissioner Homicki noted that he didn't think the Commission was ready to vote as many outstanding issues had been raised and proceeded to make a motion to continue the application to next meeting.

Commissioner McHugh seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (8-0-1)

Aye: Roberts, Jurasin, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Petrelli, Homicki and Drake

Nay:

Abs: Knecht

**3.2. PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1606-08. Z Mark Phaneuf Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 5.8 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the sale and dispensing of alcoholic beverages at 1731 Berlin Tpk. (Hooter's).**

Mark Phaneuf a General Partner of Connecticut Wings L. P., also known as Hooter's Restaurant, outlined his request for a full liquor permit. He noted that the restaurant is currently operating with only a beer and wine license. Mr. Phaneuf described how the facility currently serves the beer and wine purchase through a taproom and noted that this room will also house the alcoholic beverages.

Vice Chairman Roberts stated they should have received a memo dated March 6, 2006 from Rebecca Drew stating that the applicant should provide the bar menu and plan for bar setup to the Health District and asked the Commission if they had any additional questions.

Commissioner Petrelli questioned where the drinks will be set up and served. Mark Phaneuf responded that the alcoholic beverages will still be served out of the small room that serves the beer and wine and that the waitresses will take and deliver orders. Mr. Petrelli asked if there will be alcohol served within the outdoor patio. Mark Phaneuf stated that he will be asking the State for a patio permit.

Commissioner Oickle asked staff if the zoning requirements have been met. Peter Gillespie noted that the regulations spoke in general terms asking the Commission to consider proximity to schools, churches & synagogues, residential neighborhoods and charitable institutions.

Commissioner Oickle asked if any complaints had been filed. Mark Phaneuf stated that he was not aware of any.

Vice Chairman Roberts asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak on this application. There was none.

Jim Hughes made a motion to close the public hearing. George Oickle seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Jurasin, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Petrelli, Homicki, Knecht and Drake  
Nay:  
Abs:

George Oickle made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Fred Petrelli seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Jurasin, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Petrelli, Homicki, Knecht and Drake  
Nay:  
Abs:

**The application was approved.**

**3.3 PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1607-08-Z Phillip Rouquie** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.6.B.2 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations to construct a garage larger than permitted in a residential zone at 410 Church Street.

Phillip Rouquie stated that he has resided in Wethersfield for 27 yrs. and that he bought this blighted house in foreclosure sale. He described that the house was a total disaster when he first entered it and stated that they initially were not going to live there but as most of the major work has been completed he and his wife decided they loved the house and wanted to move in.

Mr. Rouquie outlined his proposal to construct a 1,040 s. f. 3-car garage. He stated that the overhead doors will not face the street. Mr. Rouquie then briefly described the proposed architecture and aesthetics.

Commissioner Oickle wanted an assurance that no business will be conducted there. Phil Rouquie noted that his intent is to construct this garage to house his antique cars and noted that the garage doors installed will be of a residential height and that the shingles and stone detail will match the look of the house. Mr. Rouquie added that he had cut some trees that were over grown and that there is quite a bit of distance between the back of the proposed garage and the neighboring houses.

Commissioner Homicki asked if the proposed garage would have utilities. Mr. Rouquie responded that it would have utilities and water. Mr. Homicki asked if he would be storing diesel fuel. Mr. Rouquie responded that he would not.

Vice Chairman Roberts noted that a letter dated March 15, 2008 from Diane & Dave Doot of 420 Church St. had been added to the record as being in support of this application. Mr. Roberts asked if anyone from the public wished to speak on this application.

Robert Pelletier, 430 Church St. voiced full support of this application. He stated that the property was in bad shape when the applicant purchased it and that he was happy to see how tastefully the renovations have been done. He stated that he was confident that the proposed garage will also be an enhancement to the neighborhood.

Maryann Pappas, 37 Fairview Drive said she was concerned about the lighting on the garage.

She then remarked that the property looks beautiful. Phil Rouquie stated that there is a spotlight on the existing garage and that the proposed garage will have a residential light.

Vice Chairman Roberts asked if there was any additional comments or questions from the public or from the Commission. There was none.

Jim Hughes made a motion to close the public hearing. Fred Petrelli seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Jurasin, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Petrelli, Homicki, Knecht and Drake

Nay:

Abs:

George Oickle made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Jim Hughes seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Jurasin, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Petrelli, Homicki, Knecht and Drake

Nay:

Abs:

**The application was approved.**

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **4.1 C.G.S. 8-24 Review No. 07-07 – Pyquag Village Open Spaces**

Peter Gillespie stated that the Commission had already reviewed this referral and forwarded a negative referral back to the Town Council. Mr. Gillespie noted that Mr. LaCava was supposed to be present.

Commissioner Jurasin noted that the reason the Commission had previously voted that way was that there is a question with regards to ownership of the land.

Vice Chairman Roberts noted that that while the record title is held by Mr. LaCava. Mr. LaCava had intended to deed the 2-parcels at issue to the Association sometime in 1975-76 but that the deed was never recorded.

Peter Gillespie stated Pyquag Village is no longer an active association.

Dorcas McHugh stated her opinion that this would be a liability for the Town with regards to maintenance and would set a precedent.

Commissioner Homicki noted that additional information from the town or Mr. LaCava will be necessary.

Jim Hughes made a motion to table this referral pending the receipt of additional information.

Anthony Homicki seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Jurasin, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Petrelli, Homicki, Knecht and Drake

Nay:

Abs:

**5. MINUTES---Not available.**

**6. STAFF REPORTS**

Peter Gillespie discussed with the Commission the issue of temporary and window signage.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON GENERAL MATTERS OF PLANNING AND ZONING.**

There was no public comment.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE**

**8.1** An invitation to the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies Conference to be held March 27<sup>th</sup> from 5-9 p.m. at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, CT.

**8.2** Notification of a UCONN Land Use training series to be held on May 17, 2008.

**9. PENDING APPLICATIONS TO BE HEARD AT FUTURE MEETINGS**

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1601-08-Z. Sharon Carducci** Seeking a Change of Zone from AA Residential to AAOS Residential at 361 Two Rod Highway.

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1603-08-Z. Rana Automaster** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 5.2.E.3 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for a General Repairer's License and to display and rent U-Haul's at 1652 Berlin Turnpike.

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1605-08-Z. Joe Pierz** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.5.3 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the use of an accessory apartment at 99 Prospect Street.

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1608-08-Z. John & Shireen Aforismo** Seeking a Special Permit in accordance with Section 3.6.C.3 of the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations for the construction an accessory building (tool shed) larger than permitted in a residential zone at 185 Broad Street.

**PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION NO. 1609-08-Z. Paul Randazzo** Seeking a Zone Change from the Office (O) Zone to the General Business (GB) Zone for properties located on the easterly side of the Silas Deane Highway as depicted on a plan prepared for RANDEV LLC and dated November 15, 2007.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**



**WETHERSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING AND MEETING**

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**March 18, 2008**

Jim Hughes made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. Dorcas McHugh seconded the motion.

The members voted as follows (9-0-0)

Aye: Roberts, Jurasin, McHugh, Oickle, Hughes, Petrelli, Homicki, Knecht and Drake

Nay:

Abs:

**The meeting was adjourned.**